

Open Streets Columbia Handbook



A guide to implementing open streets in Columbia.



About Open Streets

How did the Open Streets movement get started?

Open Streets events are a global movement. The first Open Streets events, called Ciclovías, were held in Bogotá to allow cyclists and pedestrians to enjoy and use public spaces allocated for streets. Hundreds of cities have adopted Open Streets, including neighbors in the Southeastern U.S. Events in Atlanta and Charlotte have grown to road closures of miles with thousands of participants. Visit <http://openstreetsproject.org/> to learn more!

What do Open Streets achieve?

Open Streets help promote a multitude of goals for cities like increasing active transportation, sustainability, and community building. Open Streets are different from a normal street festival because they focus on physical activity and community interaction rather than commercial activity and entertainment.

How has Columbia participated in the Open Streets movement?

Columbia joined the Open Streets movement on April 2, 2017 with our first event on Devine Street. The event had over 500 participants during a 3-hour time span on a Sunday afternoon. Major supporting partners for the 2017 and 2018 events include the city's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), City of Columbia, Devine Street Association, and Palmetto Conservation Foundation.

How can your organization take part in the Open Streets movement?

The City of Columbia and BPAC see opportunities to expand the impact of Open Streets in Columbia through sustainable partnerships with local organizations and neighborhoods across the city. If you're looking to join a city and nationwide movement to promote community building, then hosting Open Streets might be right for you!



How to Get Started

Any public event requires advance planning, an enthusiastic and dedicated team of organizers, adequate resources, and effective promotion. But it doesn't have to be overwhelming if you know where to start! This toolkit will help you plan for a successful event by summarizing lessons learned from other cities and specific steps from implementing past Open Streets in Columbia. For more detailed resources and to learn more about Open Streets nationwide, we recommend visiting www.openstreetsproject.org.

Key Contacts

If you have questions about information covered in this toolkit, please contact:

Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Co-Chair

Christina Galardi cgalardi@alumni.unc.edu

City Planning Staff

803-545.3222 TransportationPlanning@columbiasc.net

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OVERVIEW - SUGGESTED TIMELINE

8 months out:

- Create your team and meet to agree on your vision (see page 5)
- Determine route and day (see page 6)
- Determine budget and funding/sponsorship opportunities (see page 8)

6 months out:

- Submit your event permit to the city (see page 7 and 12)
- Develop promotional packets for activity leaders and sponsors (page 14 and 15)
- Once event date is confirmed, create a website (page 9)
- Begin social media campaign (page 9)

3 months out:

- Begin having regular phone calls with your team for planning updates
- Begin recruiting activity leaders and sponsors

1 month out:

- Deadline for activity leader commitments
- Make route map (page 20)
- Identify volunteer team

1 week out:

- Train volunteers
- Contact activity leaders to remind them of the event

Day of:

- Host your Open Street event, take pictures, and share on social media!
- Collect data about event participation (page 16 and 17)

After the event:

- Follow-up with activity leaders and team for feedback
- Share about your success and plan for the next event!



Getting Started: Build Your Team and Agree on Your Vision

1. Build a strong team of organizers.

Consider the resources available in your organization and who you need on your team. Open Streets requires some time and collaboration to be successful.

Do you have individuals who can help with organizing, promoting, and event staffing? If you're not part of a large organization with members that can serve in those roles, you may want to reach out to others that can support that work.

Potential partnerships to consider for successful Open Streets:

- Business associations
- Neighborhood associations
- Walking and biking advocacy organizations
- YMCAs and fitness groups
- Arts and culture groups
- Civic groups and service organizations
- Sports/rec leagues
- Elected officials
- Media
- Schools
- Community leaders
- Faith-based organizations
- Transportation department
- Parks and recreation department
- Public health department
- Non-profits

2. Develop your vision.

Once you've identified your core team, it's important for all partners to have the same goals from the onset. How will you promote friendly environments for walking and biking to the community during the event? Identify your key messages and themes. Open Streets Columbia on Devine prioritized providing a car-free area for residents to walk, bike, and play.

3. Establish how you will coordinate during the planning process.

Who will take the lead for various tasks? Identify where and how often you will meet.

Organizers for Open Streets Columbia on Devine used weekly conference calls to check in on progress.

Plan Your Route and Day

When picking your day and time to host the event, consider several factors:

1. Location

Identify your ideal street(s). Consider existing features such as parks or other open land areas and adjacent neighborhoods. You may need to consider existing locations and landmarks along the potential route, churches, schools, businesses, and transit stops.

Consider the traffic patterns. Road closure is simpler on a non-thoroughfare, City-maintained street, and should also not block any public safety routes -- fire stations, police departments, or hospital entrances. You can check who maintains your street here:

<http://206.74.144.9/streetfinder/Streetnames.htm>

Decide on the length of the route along the street. The Devine Street event was around a .3 mile route, but longer can be beneficial for promoting more physical activity. Open Street events average 1.2 miles in Charleston and 2 miles in Savannah.

2. Date

Choose the day of the week. Across the country, Sunday is the most popular day for hosting Open Streets because it is typically a day with lower traffic congestion.

Pick your date/ time of year. You may want to check on other activities going on in the city on the same day to avoid competition. You may also want to select a backup date in case a conflict arises.

Choose the time span of the event. Consider timing that will accommodate heat/cold for the time of year and attract attendees like families. Devine Street hosted from 1-5 p.m. on a Sunday.

Local Events Calendars:

free-times.com
experiencecolumbiasc.com
thestate.com
hugerstreeet.com

3. Activities

Keep it simple - kids and families can have fun and create lasting memories with simple, inexpensive, and sometimes unusual activities! Don't underestimate low-tech props like hula hoops or a portable slide versus large, electronic equipment and expensive programming.

Any organization can lead activities – banks, insurance companies, civic groups, and school groups. They can lead activities related to their mission, or completely different.

A great way to recruit businesses is to walk the route and talk to businesses along the way about participating. Make it easy for organizations to sign up – check out the sample activity leader packet in APPENDIX III. Set a deadline for a firm commitment.

Open Streets recommends setting expectations that organizations hosting activities can promote their business and provide samples of goods and services, but will not sell during the event. This promotes a family-friendly, non-commercial atmosphere and avoids competition with businesses along the route.

Getting the Go-Ahead: Event Permit Approvals

Submitting the permit request

The City of Columbia Police Department (CPD) requires a parade permit for an Open Streets Events. Parade permits are issued on a first-come first-serve basis for dates, as CPD resources are limited. They can be found in APPENDIX I. The permit should be printed, signed, and a single person should be responsible for it. A map of the proposed closure, with proposed barricade locations, is also helpful to provide. You will need to be clear as to whether streets that intersect your route will be kept open, or closed to through traffic.

CPD will be required to staff the closure/parade for public safety purposes. We recommend requesting the CPD bike patrol to align with the feel of an Open Streets event. A special duty request form must be submitted with the parade permit, and the current cost is \$35/hour per each assigned officer, with a three hour minimum on working special duty.

Either with the permit submittal, or shortly thereafter, letters (or a formal email) of support from any neighborhood or business associations adjacent to or affected by the event should be provided to Officer Hall (rjhall@columbiasc.net) which reference the event date, time, and location. Current contacts for neighborhood association presidents can be obtained from Charmaine Clark at the City's Community Development Department at cdclark@columbiasc.net.

Other special considerations

During the planning phase, organizers of Open Streets on Devine set food and alcohol guidelines to promote a family-friendly atmosphere and local business: food sales only from businesses along the route, and no alcohol. Your planning team should consider your approach. If beer and wine is to be served in the street, this requires a separate process, and a resolution must be passed by City Council. These must be submitted over 60 days in advance, and should be coordinated via the instructions on the website in APPENDIX I. If establishments want to serve beer or wine on the sidewalk, or outdoors of their structures, they must have an encroachment to do so – these are obtained through City Planning & Development Services: <https://www.columbiasc.net/development-inspections/encroachments>

Be sure to remind your activity leaders/vendors of the Fire Department's regulations regarding special events. These are especially of note for the use of EZ ups, or other temporary structures. See the regulations here: <https://colafire.net/special-events-rules-and-regs/>

Resources and Funding

Funding shouldn't prohibit you from having a successful Open Street event. Below are some frequently asked questions related to funding.

What resources/funding do I need?

Open Streets events do not have to be expensive to host. Based on previous experiences in Columbia, an Open Streets event can be organized for under \$2000.

Sample budget:

\$50 - Website

\$600 - T shirts for volunteers

\$700 - Portapotties

\$300 - Printing promotional materials

\$350-700 - Event insurance (costs vary)

\$280 - Street closure (2 officers on duty for 4 hours)

In-kind donations can bring your direct costs down. For example, a local grocery store can donate water bottles for volunteers, and a partner organization or volunteer with design skills can create your logo or provide free printing. Keep in mind that in order to receive sponsorships the organization has to be a 501c and if not a 501c they must find a 501c organization to be the fiduciary. However, if needed sponsorships still can be considered advertising or a marketing write-off and not a charitable donation.

You can certainly enhance your program if you have more resources. But, the key takeaway from this guide is that Open Streets are not expensive to run. It is what you want from your event!

How can I recruit sponsors?

People can certainly ask for donations via word of mouth – but a sponsorship packet can be helpful for more successful requests. Check out the sample sponsorship packet in APPENDIX II as an example.



Event Promotion

Here are our top 10 tips for getting the word out to the community about your Open Streets event. Good promotion doesn't require a big budget but does require some time and dedication.

1. A basic tool for marketing your event is a one-pager about the event that can be included in packets of information and used for press announcements.
2. Create a website for the event, or a page on the website of a host organization. Promotional materials can direct the public to this homepage for more details about the event.
3. Use social media to promote the event. A Facebook event, Twitter, and/or Instagram can help people share information about the event with others in their networks. Get more shares via social media by promoting the organizations serving as activity leaders or businesses along the route with your account – they will repost in turn, further spreading the word to their customers.
4. Create flyers, brochures, or business cards to pass out. Explore opportunities to co-promote with other local events. For example, Open Street Columbia on Devine put fliers about our event in the race day packets for St. Patrick's Day in Five Points.
5. Talk with radio and television stations about possible PSA announcements. Open Streets Columbia on Devine was able to get small ads in local papers as an in-kind donation.
6. Post information on online community calendars. See page 6 for a list.
7. Make sure to create an official city press release.
8. Recruit businesses along the route to promote event. Ask them to post fliers in their windows, host sidewalk sales or special deals on the day of the event, or put information on their social media.
9. After activity leaders have confirmed participation, make an event map. Share the map in promotional materials so people interested in attending can see what activities will be offered. Make sure to identify a central location for event organizers to answer questions.
10. On the day of the event, make sure someone is continually posting announcements and pictures of the event, perhaps with an event hashtag. Follow up after the event to recap its success and gain excitement for the next one!



Logistics

To make sure your event goes smoothly and participants feel safe and secure throughout the event, you might want to consider some of the following logistics:

- ☐ Identify your rain plan
- ☐ Identify nearest restroom location, either a public bathroom or a business along the route willing to allow walk-ins
- ☐ Discuss optional components, like music, need for electricity/generators
- ☐ Make decisions with organizing partners on event policies, like food and alcohol sales
- ☐ Consider bike valet and bike parking, and provide clear instructions through website for how attendees can travel to the event by foot, bike, and transit
- ☐ Plan for event support:
 - Determine how many you need and how to recruit volunteers
 - Assign where volunteers will be placed and what tasks they will do
 - Determine whether you will host a volunteer training/orientation
 - How will volunteers be identified at the event (i.e. a t-shirt, button, nametag)
- ☐ Create a central location for volunteers, activity leaders, and attendees to come for answers to any questions

Potential Volunteer Needs:

- Road closure
- Answer any questions of participants
- Handing out information/maps
- Evaluation



Evaluation

Evaluating your event can help demonstrate your success and garner more support in the future.

You can:

- collect information about the number of people who participated
- survey participants and activity leaders about their experience
- survey businesses along the route about their experience
- survey volunteers, police, and city officials for feedback to improve further Open Street events
- create a brief similar to APPENDIX IV to share about your success from the event

Example from Devine Open Street

Samples of evaluation materials are in Appendix V. We presented this information to the City Council to demonstrate our success and posted on our website. See the two-page summary brief we developed in Appendix IV.



APPENDIX

Appendix I. City of Columbia Event Permit Form

Sample form – visit Columbia Police Department website for updated version:

<https://columbiapd.net/parade-permits/>

[Print Form](#)

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
APPLICATION FOR PARADE PERMIT**

Name of Person Seeking Permit _____	Date _____
Address _____	Phone _____
Signature _____	
Organization Asking for Permit _____	
Address _____	Phone _____
Name of Parade Chairman _____	
Address _____	Phone _____
Date of Proposed Parade _____	Assembly Time _____
Starting Time _____	Termination Time _____

Parade Route:

Assembly Area: _____

Starting Point: _____

Route: _____

Termination Point: _____

Number Participating in Parade: Persons _____

Animals (describe) _____

Vehicles (describe) _____

Purpose of Parade _____

PARADE PERMIT

☐ Granted as applied for:

☐ Granted as applied for with the following conditions (see attachment):

☐ Denied - Reason: _____

☐ Alternative Permit will be granted with the following conditions: _____

The Columbia Police Department prohibits all individuals from carrying a weapon/weapon during parades and marches which are held in the City limits of Columbia, South Carolina. This excludes period weapons which are to be used for a specific purpose, i.e., market loaders, sabres and military weaponry.

Written notice of acceptance of alternative permit must be received within three (3) days.

Date _____

Office of the Chief
Columbia, South Carolina

44:03 REV

Appendix II. Sample Open Streets Activity Leader Application



First Name:

Last Name:

Organization:

Email:

Phone Number (Please include area code):

Website:

Type of Proposed Activity:

Activity Description:

Which Category Would You Fit In?

- ☐ Sustainable Transportation
- ☐ Physical Fitness and Wellness
- ☐ Civic Pride
- ☐ Living Streets
- ☐ Other

Do you or your organization carry an insurance policy for general liability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Additional Notes or Questions:

Contact: Please email completed contracts to Mary Roe: mroe@palmettoconservation.org

Appendix III. Sample Sponsorship Opportunity Form



April 22nd, 2018

Columbia, SC

Devine Street

City of Columbia Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and Devine Street Merchant Association

Open Streets Overview:

Open Streets initiatives temporarily close a street to automobile traffic so that people may use the street for just about any activity but driving — walking, bicycling, playing, and meeting neighbors.

Open Streets is more than a festival — it's a street transformation.

Open Streets Columbia is about:

Sustainable Transportation Opportunities.

Supporting a vision of streets that serve all people, no matter if they are traveling on foot, by bike, by transit, or in cars.

Physical Fitness and Wellness. *Promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical activity.*

Civic Pride. *Celebrating the unique character of Columbia and the event's host neighborhoods – Devine Street, Shandon, and Melrose Heights.*

Living Streets. *Experiencing the street as a vibrant place for community activity and local business.*

By hosting its first Open Streets event, Columbia is joining a global movement. The first Open Streets events, called Ciclovías, were held in Bogotá, Colombia to allow cyclists and pedestrians to enjoy and use public spaces allocated for streets. Hundreds of cities have adopted Open Streets, including neighbors in the Southeastern U.S. Events in Atlanta and Charlotte have grown to road closures of miles with thousands of participants.

Sponsorship Levels:

Contribution	Sustainable Transportation Champion Sponsor \$500.00	Wellness Champion Sponsor \$250.00	Civic Pride Champion Sponsor \$150.00	Living streets Champion Sponsor \$50.00
Vendor Booth / Table	x	x	x	x
Event Website: Logo/Name	x	x	x	
Event Program: Name/Logo	x	x	x	x
Logo on Event T-Shirt	x	x		
Open Street T-shirt	x	x		
Social Media Recognition	x	x	x	x
Name Recognition at Introduction	x			

Sponsorship Commitment:

Business/Organization Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

State, City, Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Contribution Level / Amount \$ _____

Authorized Donor: _____

Method of Payment: ☐ Mail

MAIL: Send check, payable to: BPAC, 722 King St, Columbia, SC 29205

To request additional information on sponsorship levels or in-kind donations, please contact:

Mary Roe at mroe@palmettoconservation.org

Appendix IV. Evaluation

Inaugural Open Streets Columbia Survey – Help Us Make Open Streets Even Better!

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1) What is your home zip code?

2) How did you hear about this event? (Circle all that apply)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Newspaper | 4 TV | 7 City of Columbia website |
| 2 Online events calendar | 5 Radio | 8 Email listserv |
| 3 Word of mouth | 6 Facebook | 9 Other: _____ |

3) How did you get to today's event?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 Car | 3 Bicycle | 5 Other: _____ |
| 2 Bus/public transportation | 4 Walk/run | |

4) What did you enjoy most about Open Streets Columbia?

--

5) In the future, what should Open Streets Columbia look like? (Circle the best option)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Same event but different neighborhood
Where? _____ | 4 Small routes throughout the city on the same day |
| 2 Single route but longer distance | 5 Just the same, no change! |
| 3 Cluster of car-free streets | 6 Another suggestion? _____ |

Inaugural Open Streets Columbia Survey – Help Us Make Open Streets Even Better!

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1) What is your home zip code?

2) How did you hear about this event? (Circle all that apply)

- | | | |
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3) How did you get to today's event?

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|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 Car | 3 Bicycle | 5 Other: _____ |
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4) What did you enjoy most about Open Streets Columbia?

--

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- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Same event but different neighborhood
Where? _____ | 4 Small routes throughout the city on the same day |
|---|--|

2 Single route but longer distance

3 Cluster of car-free streets

5 Just the same, no change!

6 Another suggestion? _____

6) How often should Columbia host Open Streets? (Circle one)

once a year

spring and fall

monthly

weekly

No

Yes. (specify): _____

7) Did visiting Open Streets make you aware of a business or community organization that you did not know about?

Nothing.

Less than \$10.

More than \$10.

No

Yes

8) How much money have you/your family spent or plan on spending today at a restaurant or store along the route?

9) Did participating in Open Streets increase your physical activity this week?

10) How many people came with you today? 1 (just me) 2 3 4 5+

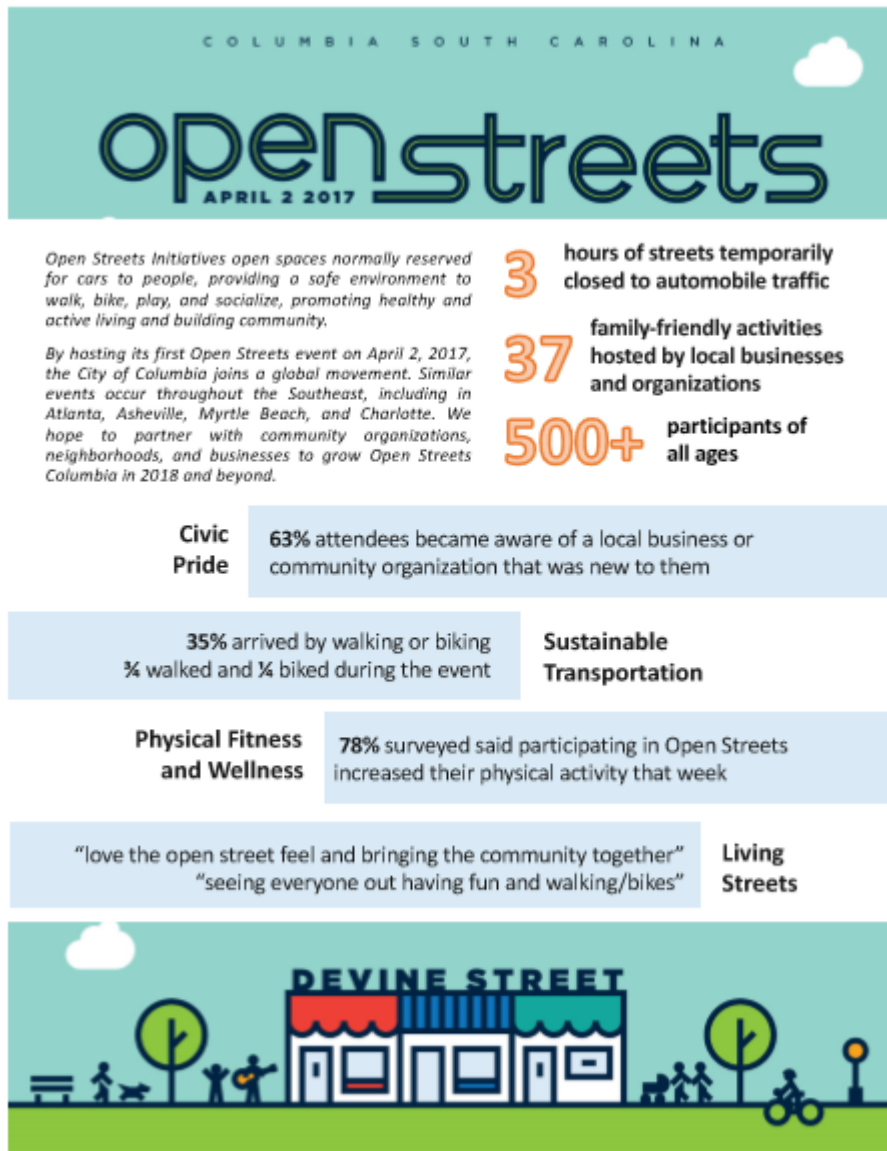
11) How many people with you were age 18 or younger? 0 1 2 3 4+

Other comments?

Thank you for your feedback! We hope to see you again next time!

Appendix V. Open Streets Brief

This summary was developed using data and survey results collected during the 2017 event on Devine Street and presented to the City Council and shared on the website following the event.



What's next?

After launching the Columbia's first Open Streets, the City's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and its partners are already looking toward the future. How can we continue the momentum?



Explore new opportunities for when and where Open Streets is held

1/3 of attendees suggested hosting Open Streets twice a year. Most want to continue seeing this initiative on Devine Street. There was equal support for either: 1) a single route but a longer distance or 2) small routes in multiple locations on the same day.

Expand event publicity

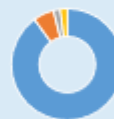
Now that Open Streets is rolling, event organizers can capitalize on opportunities for increasing awareness of future events, particularly with local news media. 25% of attendees heard about the event through social media.

Engage more neighborhoods, potentially by building capacity for other groups to host their own

38% of attendees were from the 29205 zip code. Event organizers can share resources with community leaders in other parts of the City so more residents can access walking and biking events close to home.

Open Streets on Devine Street

72% adults, 28% children



- white
- black
- Asian
- Hispanic

Promote friendly environments for walking and biking

The City's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is engaged in ongoing work to make Columbia a great place to live, walk, and bike – not just during Open Streets, but every day.

BPAC supports City staff in implementing Columbia's bicycle and pedestrian plans and policies and advises the Mayor and City Council on residents' interests related to walking and biking.



Interested in supporting this initiative in the future?
Visit <https://openstreetscolumbia.com/>



Appendix VI. Activity Map and Examples from Open Streets on Devine Street 2017

